

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BERLIN 00615 261917Z
ACTION EUR-12

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-----033464 261925Z /66
P 261720Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6576

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BERLIN 00615

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPN, GE
SUBJECT: VAN NORMAN PUBLICITY

1. ELLEN LENTZ, WEST BERLIN NY TIMES CORRESPONDENT, HAD LENGTHY SESSION WITH PAO ON OVERALL US-GDR RELATIONS AND INTERNAL GDR DEVELOPMENTS, AT VERY END OF WHICH SHE ASKED IF THERE WERE ANY AMERICANS IN JAIL. AFTER CONSULTATION WITH AMBASSADOR, PAO AND CONOFF DISCUSSED VAN NORMAN CASE WITH LENTZ WITHOUT HOWEVER MENTIONING NAME OR SPECIFICS, AND ON STRICTLY BACKGROUND BASIS. IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT VAN NORMAN HAD ADMITTED GUILT, GDR HAD IMPOSED LIGHT SENTENCE, AND BOTH SIDES HAD AVOIDED PUBLICITY WHICH COULD ONLY HARM CHANCES OF EARLY DISCHARGE FROM PRISON. LENTZ AGREED THAT PUBLICITY COULD BE HARMFUL HIS CHANCES FOR RELEASE PRIOR TO SERVING OF FULL SENTENCE, BUT IMPLIED FOR SAKE OF ACCURACY MIGHT MENTION MERELY THAT ONE AMERICAN IN JAIL IN GDR.

2. EMBASSY WISHES ALERT DEPARTMENT THIS POSSIBILITY WHICH WOULD BE VERY FIRST PRESS NOTICE OF VAN NORMAN, ALBEIT WITHOUT NAME, BUT WHICH MIGHT INSPIRE QUESTIONS AT NOONDAY BRIEFING. BOLEN

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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